

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a plurality of starch molded products, comprising:

filling a tray with starch, the tray having a horizontally extending base and a vertically extending peripheral border wall containing starch in the tray, the border wall having a top edge;

leveling the starch in the tray to a level below the top edge;

forming a plurality of cavities into the starched contained in the tray;

filling liquefied ~~starch-molded~~ mixture into the cavities;

curing the ~~starch-molded~~liquefied mixture to form the starch molded products; and

separating starch molded products from the starch.

2. (Original) The method of claim 1, further comprising:

selectively adjusting the level of the starch in the tray relative to an amount of starch displaced as a result of the cavities formed during the stamping step.

3. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1-2 wherein the selectively adjusting step sets a level of the starch in the tray that is between 1 and 10 millimeters below the top edge of the tray.

4. (Original) The method of claim 1, wherein the leveling step comprises: scraping a top layer of starch from the tray filled with starch at the level with an elongate blade, thereafter;

brushing the starch in the tray at the level with an elongate brush.

5. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the tray is rectangular with a leading wall, a trailing wall, and first and second side walls transversely between leading and trailing walls forming the border wall, wherein the elongate blade fits transversely between the first and second side walls, the brush being longer than the elongate blade and engaging the side walls to brush starch carried on top of the side walls.

6. (Original) The method of claim 4 wherein the leading wall, the trailing wall and the side walls have top ends that lie in a common plane to form the top edge, the elongate blade being resilient and flexible, the step of scraping further comprising:

deflecting a bottom edge of the elongate blade past the leading wall and allow entry of the blade into the tray below the top edge; and

deflecting the elongate blade past the trailing wall to allow exit of the blade from the tray.

7. (Original) The method of claim 4, further comprising collecting scraped and brushed starch in a recycling hopper underneath the tray.

8. (Original) The method of claim 4, wherein the blade and brush are fixed in a stationary position, further comprising conveying the tray past the blade and the brush.

9. (Original) The method of claim 8, further comprising:
simultaneously and selectively adjusting the level of the brush and the blade vertically relative to the tray relative to an amount of starch displaced as a result of the cavities formed during the stamping step.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9 wherein the adjusting step sets a level of the starch in the tray that is between 1 and 10 millimeters below the top edge of the tray.

11. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of forming a plurality of cavities further comprises displacing starch vertically upward above the level due to the formation of the cavities and substantially equivalent to a vertical height of the top edge, preventing substantially all starch from spilling over the top edge by leveling the starch in the tray to a sufficient level below the top edge.

12. (Currently Amended) A method of manufacturing a plurality of starch molded products with a mogul machine, comprising:

conveying a plurality of empty trays on a conveyor mechanism;

depositing starch in the empty trays, the tray having a horizontally extending base and a vertically extending peripheral border wall containing starch in the tray, the border wall having a top edge;

leveling the starch deposited with at least one resilient member, the resilient member deflecting past the top edge to enter and exit the tray, the resilient member having ~~an~~ a bottom edge dropping below the top edge when in the tray to level starch in the tray below the top edge;

stamping a plurality of cavities into the starch contained in the tray, the formation of the cavities displacing starch vertically upward toward the top edge, the starch being prevented from spilling over the top edge due to the leveling;

pumping liquefied ~~starch-molded~~ mixture into the cavities;

curing the ~~starch-molded~~liquefied mixture to form the starch molded products; and separating starch molded products from the starch.

13. (Original) The method of claim 12, further comprising:
selectively adjusting the leveling of the starch in the tray relative to an amount of starch displaced as a result of the cavities formed during the stamping step.

14. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the selectively adjusting step sets a level of the starch in the tray that is between 1 and 10 millimeters below the top edge of the tray.

15. (Original) The method of claim 12, wherein the leveling step comprises:
scraping a top layer of starch from the tray filled with starch at the level with an elongate blade, thereafter;

brushing the starch in the tray at the level with an elongate brush, whereby the elongate brush and the elongate blade comprise two of the resilient members.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15 wherein the tray is rectangular with a leading wall, a trailing wall, and first and second side walls transversely between leading and trailing walls forming the border wall, wherein the elongate blade fits transversely between the first and second side walls, the brush being longer than the elongate blade and engaging the side walls to brush starch carried on top of the side walls.

17. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 15 wherein the leading wall, the trailing wall and the side walls have top ends that lie in a common plane to form the top edge, said deflecting comprising:

deflecting a bottom edge of the elongate blade past the leading wall and allowing entry of the blade into the tray below the top edge; and

deflecting the elongate blade past the trailing wall to allow exit of the blade from the tray.

18. (Original) The method of claim 15, further comprising collecting scraped and brushed starch in a recycling hopper underneath the tray.

19. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the blade and brush are fixed in a stationary position, wherein the tray is conveyed past the blade and the brush.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, further comprising:
simultaneously and selectively adjusting the level of the brush and the blade vertically relative to the tray relative to an amount of starch displaced as a result of the cavities formed during the stamping step.

21. (Original) The method of claim 20 wherein the adjusting step sets a level of the starch in the tray that is between 1 and 10 millimeters below the top edge of the tray.

22. (Original) The method of claim 12 wherein the step of forming further comprises displacing starch vertically upward above the level due to the formation of the cavities and substantially equivalent to a vertical height of the top edge, preventing starch from spilling over the top edge.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 12 wherein the conveying ~~comprising~~ comprises intermittently conveying for the depositing leveling and stamping steps and controlled conveying for the pumping step.

24-40. (Cancelled)
